

UC Berkeley

Prompts for Inclusion: FAQ Poster

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7g85148w>

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Publication Date

2018

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7g85148w#supplemental>

Prompts for Inclusion: FAQ

Whiteness, straightness, binary genders, and able bodies are centralized privileges in most public language—these identifiers form the systemic bias encoded in every aspect of public life. This bias is inscribed in public institutions, and we are all participants, whether wittingly or not; here “you” and “your organization” are one entity. A culture of inclusion necessitates decentering biased frameworks, both individually and institutionally. This work requires an awareness of difference and a willingness to engage cultural sensitivity beyond our individual needs. It is a never-ending work in progress, and it starts by questioning everything.

Do you actively seek to cultivate inclusion, across race, age, ability, class, sexual, and/or gender identity? How have you examined your systemic bias in an organized way? How do you evaluate your efforts at inclusive practices—in decision making, audience development, public messaging, hiring, programming, project management, leadership positions, board seats? // Do you solicit, listen to, and engage critical positions outside your organizational practices? Do you prioritize a budget for professional anti-bias or anti-racism training, or disability accessibility professionals? Do you hire sensitivity readers to review materials? // Do you identify as white or white-passing? If yes, how deeply have you considered your personal, familial, and/or historical relationship to white supremacy? To systemic racism? Does your organizational history consider the social-political context of its origins? Do you project values of inclusivity while also accepting funding from individuals and businesses whose wealth is based on countering these efforts? // Are your staff and/or audience primarily white? Do you center whiteness in your written materials? When you write about people of color, LGBTQAI-identified persons, people with disabilities, or women, do you foreground their perceived identity in your descriptions of them or their work? Do you also identify white, straight, cis, able-bodied people in the same way? // Has your organization considered its labor relationships with immigrants? To what extent are your operations dependent upon immigrants with or without documentation? How do you support a sustainable livelihood for these workers? // Do your public programs present more diversity than the work you promote? Have you created a perception of diversity by engaging diverse participants in opportunities for low- or no-pay participation in your organization? Do you leverage images of nonwhite/disabled/age-diverse participants to publicize an impression of organizational diversity in your official imaging and marketing? // Does the makeup of your paid organizational team reflect the population of your region? Do you balance diversity numbers on your team by compartmentalizing lower-level positions for “diverse” candidates? // Is English the primary language presented in your informational materials and programming? Do you also have other language options or audio translations for text? Braille? Large-format font? Have you adopted gender-neutral pronouns in your written materials? Do your discursive events feature multilingual translators or sign-language interpreters? // Have you ever declined to participate in or produce an all-white exhibition, panel, program, or workshop? Even if inadvertently, do you organize all-white panels, shows, and juries, and/or bestow awards to only white recipients? Are you willing to vocally object to the creation of all-white spaces or platforms? // Do you present work or ideas that rely on Black or brown people as labor, materials, performers, or subjects for work or ideas produced by white people? Do you question these racial dynamics for their relationship to exploitation? Do you engage in or promote cultural appropriation? Do you co-opt cultural traditions without engaging the people for whom these traditions are a personal identity? Do you prioritize making space for people to speak from their own experiences? // Have you considered the ways in which your public spaces, or the histories of your public space, might maintain references to racial or class violence, economic exclusion, gendered supremacy, or other forms of oppression? // Do you identify as able bodied? Have you considered how your impressions of accessibility are determined by your own abilities? Do you expect “visible proof”—to be able to visually identify someone’s differences—before making accommodations? Have you consulted with a professional to review your site and programming for accessibility issues? // Do your seating, desks, tables, exhibition spaces, and public programming anticipate bodily differences and independent accessibility? Do you offer comfortable, accessible seating options throughout your exhibitions and events to accommodate the mobility impaired, along with stability for larger bodies, the elderly, and those with disabilities? Do you expect viewers to stand in place to read text statements or watch video clips? Are your desks or writing tables oriented toward right-handedness? Are your spaces wheelchair-, walker-, and stroller-accessible? Are your entrances and exits motorized for independent access and freedom of movement? // Does your environment attempt to consider the different needs of neurodiversity and sensory-sensitive or impaired audiences? Do your explanatory materials feature text, visual signifiers, audio options, braille, or multilingual interpretations? Do you offer audio tours, audio transcriptions of exhibition text, or captioning on videos? Do you implement amplification systems to accommodate those with hearing issues—or do you expect that speaking “loud enough,” by your own perception, will suffice? // Are celebratory or premium events the exclusive domain of members, supporters, and funders, with exclusionary pricing? Do ticket prices create an economic barrier? Are your notions of affordability determined by the costs to an individual in your income bracket? Is your perception of affordability changed by considering the associated costs for a family of four or five? // Do you regularly evaluate which goods, services, or experiences you offer for free? Are you committed to regular, publicized free programs? Does your organization offer free access to community groups, schools, or youth programs? Is your discounted admission based on college enrollment, inadvertently privileging an educated class and excluding young workers? // Does access to your organization rely on technological literacy or access to cellphones, tablets, or other costly devices? Do you offer public access to these devices in your public spaces? Have you considered how your website, a public space, may or may not foster inclusion? // Do you purport to engage local youth and/or college organizations while focusing primarily on private schools or four-year colleges? Do you engage public schools, community colleges, trade schools, alternative educational programs, or those not institutionally affiliated? // Is your relationship to community organizations primarily limited to one-off public programs? Do you build audience engagement through sustained partnerships with local community organizations defined across age, race, gender identity, physical abilities, or class? Does your outreach extend to your neighborhood and immediate community in visible, tangible, and long-term ways? Do you offer extended hours to accommodate different working schedules and availability? // Does your organization offer binary-gendered bathrooms or gender-neutral bathrooms? Do you offer bathrooms with disability access or accommodation for families? Do your restrooms offer sanitary napkins or tampons? Do they feature a diaper-changing deck? Do you offer a clean, comfortable space for breastfeeding? // Does your organization offer family-friendly events, children’s activities, childcare, and senior events? // Is your work aimed at local communities or is it aimed at tourism? // Do you include front- and back-of-the-house team members in your acknowledgements? Do your team photos/events/listings include service workers, facilities workers, night workers, part-time workers, and volunteers? // Do you consider your online audience as valuable as your embodied audience? Your online audience represents a geographically diverse audience with all of the same potential for social and financial impact as your embodied local audience.

This is a lot of questions, and this document is not comprehensive—my own bias is embedded, too. I am no expert, I’m a student of these ideas; it takes everyone’s effort, and we’re all accountable. This work is hard and progress is slow. It requires humility. Are you willing to get it wrong for the sake of getting it right? Are you working to strip away bias and to foster greater inclusion, wherever you can? If not, are you willing to start here? —Christian L. Frock

Prompts for Inclusion: FAQ by Christian L. Frock was originally published online by Art Practical on October 16, 2017. The original text and this poster pdf are freely available online at <https://www.artpractical.com/feature/prompts-for-inclusion-faq/>.

This poster was published by the Worth Ryder Art Gallery at the UC Berkeley Department of Art Practice on the occasion of In Real Life: The 2018 UC Berkeley Art Practice Department Exhibition, October 10 - November 1, 2018; it is also published online by the California Digital Library's Open Access eScholarship platform and is freely available online here: https://escholarship.org/uc/berkeley_art_practice_inclusion.

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This poster is set in Acumin Pro designed by Robert Slimbach, who intended for the typeface to convey a balanced and rational quality; it was published in a suite by Adobe in 2015. The first edition of this poster was printed in rich black with a Ricoh Color Laser Printer on Staples Pastels Colored Copy Paper (11 x 17 inch ledger size, 20lb density, 30% recycled, acid-free) in pink, green, gold, and canary yellow; and on Xerox Multipurpose Copy Laser Inkjet Printer Paper (11 x 17 inch ledger size, 20lb density, acid-free) in bright white. This text and poster were edited by Michele Carlson. The poster was designed by Vivian Sming.

Prompts for Inclusion: FAQ by Christian L. Frock
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Printed in the United States of America

Berkeley, California
October 2018